

Elements of the Veterans Court

- Enrollment is voluntary and, once admitted, program compliance is court-ordered.
- Participants must have a record of service in the United States Military and have diagnosed mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders that contributed to the situation that resulted in their involvement in the criminal justice system.
- Public safety is a high priority. Participants are carefully screened prior to admission and and monitored and drug tested during the program.
- Participants are assigned a mentor, a Veteran who volunteers to assist and support participants.
- Early intervention is essential, with prompt referral & screening.
- The Veterans Court staff works with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other Veterans groups to provide supervision and case management to participants.

Why Participate?

Participants in the Veterans Court generally remain in the community for treatment rather than leaving the community or obtaining treatment in a more restrictive placement. If successful, participants may receive a lesser criminal sentence or may not be sentenced to any jail or prison time.

If needed, participants receive help getting services such as housing, job training and medical care.

For more details about the Veterans Court Program and potential benefits of participation, contact the Court Coordinator or your attorney.

The Missoula Veterans Court strives to improve public safety by working with Veterans involved in the criminal justice system who have mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. The court works to address the Veteran's need for treatment while holding the Veteran accountable for his or her actions.

Court staff is committed to assisting Veteran participants in their efforts to be productive healthy citizens, while working to ensure public safety.

Missoula Veterans Treatment Court

KEEPING FAITH WITH VETERANS



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What Is Veterans Court?

The Veterans Court was developed in 2011 to improve the response of the Missoula County justice system to Veterans whose criminal actions appear to stem from the stresses of war. The Missoula Veterans Court accepts Veterans with mental health challenges and co-occurring substance abuse disorders, who have been charged with or convicted of any misdemeanor or non-registrable felony. The Court requires participants to comply with appropriate community programs for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Participant compliance with court requirements is reviewed and monitored weekly by the court team. The Court works with the VA, Veterans groups and community treatment providers to support the participant's recovery and to reduce his or her future involvement in the criminal justice system.

Guidelines for Admission

1) The Referral:

A prospective participant may be referred by any person, including an attorney, judge, treatment provider, family member, detention center staff or other concerned person.

2) Defense Attorney:

Before Veterans Court staff discuss the program with a prospective participant, a defense attorney must agree that staff may speak with him or her to determine eligibility for the program.

3) Screening and Intake:

The Veterans Court staff meets with the prospective participant, in the detention center if necessary, to:

- (a) assess willingness to participate in the program;
- (b) perform eligibility screening; and
- (c) complete all necessary paperwork, such as releases of information to obtain records.

If eligibility criteria are met, Veterans Court staff:

- (a) obtain pertinent records, and
- (b) develop a preliminary court treatment plan.



4) **Veterans Court Team:** The Court Team is composed of: the court coordinator, a prosecutor, defense attorney, probation officer, community supervision officer, treatment providers, the participant and the judge. Representatives of Montana VA and the Missoula Vet Center participate in team meetings.

5) **Acceptance or Denial in Program:** After screening and upon recommendation by Court staff, the Court team discusses the case at its weekly meeting and decides whether or not the prospective participant will be accepted into the program.

6) Acceptance:

The participant is notified of acceptance and scheduled to appear in Veterans Court to review and sign the participant agreement and treatment plan. At the first appearance, the Judge welcomes the participant into the Veterans Court Program and outlines the obligations for the Veteran until the next court appearance.

